

Prisoners' Voting Rights

The hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Leggatt) said prisons are places of horror. That is not altogether correct. At certain times and under certain conditions, for instance if there is trouble in penal institutions, prisons may become places of horror. But Millhaven, which is certainly one of our most modern prisons built with the most up-to-date concepts in mind, is not normally a place of horror. A prison like that can be a place of harmony and bring profit to those serving time in it, as well as to guards and members of the administration.

The hon. member for Lafontaine also made the point that prisoners are not non-persons. Nobody says they are. On the other hand most of us think that convicted prisoners must lose some of their rights, such as the right to personal liberty, to family association, and the right to the franchise, in accordance with the provisions of the Canada Elections Act.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Madam Speaker, will the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Alkenbrack: There are only a few more minutes left, Madam Speaker, but very well, I will accept the hon. member's question.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Madam Speaker, in view of comments made a moment ago and again recently by the hon. member, may I ask him if he is aware that in Manitoba, in the first provincial election after the 1919 strike, certain persons—I believe there were three—were elected while in prison? They walked out of prison and into the legislature. One of them later became mayor of the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Alkenbrack: That was certainly to the later credit of those persons and to him who became mayor. Of course the hon. member comes from Winnipeg. There must be some reason behind the fact that certain people were elected in prison, and then walked out of prison and took their seats in whatever body they had been elected as members. I imagine that the present provisions of the Canada Elections Act did not apply. I do not know why this happened. The provisions of the act could not have applied, or what happened would not have been possible.

The Canada Elections Act is on our statute books, and has remained there for a number of years, obviously for a good reason. I oppose the enfranchising of prisoners. I cannot see any advantage at this time in enfranchising prisoners; neither can I see any advantage in paying them the minimum wage which this Government proposes to do soon. We are told this is only an experiment. I think it is an experiment which is being conducted at the expense of the citizens of Canada who have been able to stay out of prison and retain their freedom. May I call it six o'clock.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): As the hour appointed for private members' business has expired, does the House agree that we should revert to committee of the whole, and then call it six o'clock?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[Mr. Alkenbrack.]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

INCOME TAX ACT

The House resumed consideration in committee of Bill C-49, to amend the statute law relating to income tax—Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton)—Mrs. Morin in the chair.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: As it is six o'clock, I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

The Chairman: When the committee rose, clause 4, with an amendment proposed by the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain, were under consideration.

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Chairman, I did not know word had gotten around that I would be speaking on this particular amendment. The interest is somewhat surprising. I know that on other occasions I have looked at the other side and have seen only the member speaking, the leader and few others.

I want to respond to a comment made this afternoon by the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona. I think he missed the point when he alleged that the Petrosar project would somehow be detrimental to the development of the petrochemical industry in Alberta.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. I do not think the Petrosar plant has anything to do with the amendment on which we are now ready to vote.

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Chairman, I see the hon. member for Calgary Centre did not pay as close attention to the debate this afternoon as I did. I am somewhat surprised, because it was one of his members who raised the Petrosar project and the development of the petrochemical industry. I thought he was in error, and that is why I intend to respond to his comments.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

The Chairman: Order, please. The Chair is having difficulty hearing the parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Cullen: I thank you for your courtesy, Mr. Chairman, which you have seen fit to extend to me. Unhappily, it is not coming from—

Mr. Roche: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. If the parliamentary secretary intends to kill 15 or 20 minutes waiting for his colleagues to return from dinner, would he mind not responding to just one sentence from my speech today and answer some of the real questions raised this afternoon? Would he answer my question as to how the Minister of Finance can reconcile his position as chairman of the IMF committee, trying to cushion the effect of petro dollars, with his responsibilities in pushing